

# ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA NEW YORK

EPA ID# NYD980506232



**EPA REGION 2  
CONGRESSIONAL  
DIST. 24  
St. Lawrence County  
Massena**

## Site Description

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The 3500 acre ALCOA facility is an active aluminum production plant, parts of which have been in operation since 1903. The production plant includes three operating areas: the fabricating area, the ingot-extrusion area, and the smelting plant. Fourteen areas of contamination are located at the facility and have been investigated and cleaned up under the authority of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Clean up of the ALCOA facility was completed in 2001.

The ALCOA facility is bounded on the north by the St. Lawrence River, on the southwest by the Massena Power Canal, and on the southeast by the Grasse River. During routine plant operations, ALCOA discharged wastewater to the Grasse River and to the Massena Power Canal through four permitted outfalls. As a result of these discharges, sediments in the river system surrounding the ALCOA facility have been contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The site is adjacent to the Village of Massena, with a population of approximately 15,000. The St. Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation, *Akwesasne*, is located 8 miles to the east.

### Site Responsibility:

The contaminated sediments in the Grasse River system are being addressed through Federal and potentially responsible parties' actions. Contaminated plant property and groundwater are being addressed through State and potentially responsible parties' actions.

#### **NPL LISTING HISTORY**

This is a Non-NPL Site. Actions are being taken at this NPL-caliber site to coordinate with work at the General Motors (Central Foundry Division) NPL Site.

## Threats and Contaminants

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Low-level PCB contamination has been found throughout the entire length of the Lower Grasse River from the Massena Power Canal to the confluence of the Grasse River with the St. Lawrence River. This seven mile stretch contains approximately 1,900,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment. The highest levels of contamination were found in a limited area immediately adjacent to ALCOA's primary outfall. These sediments were addressed by the non-time-critical removal action in 1995.

The consumption of fish or wildlife from contaminated areas is of concern because of the tendency of PCBs to accumulate in the fatty tissues of fish and wildlife. In 1990, the New York State Department of Health issued a consumption advisory for the Lower Grasse River recommending that no fish be eaten. Public water supply systems are not contaminated.

## Cleanup Approach

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This site is being addressed in two stages: a non-time-critical removal action which is focused on removing the highly contaminated sediments located adjacent to ALCOA's primary outfall and a long-term remedial action focusing on cleanup of the remaining river system sediments.

## Response Action Status

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**Non-time-critical Removal Action:** In 1995, ALCOA, under the EPA's oversight, completed dredging of the most highly contaminated sediments from the area adjacent to its primary outfall. This action removed about 3,000 cubic yards of sediment, boulders and debris. Approximately 8,000 lbs. of PCBs were removed by the action, an estimated 20% of the PCB mass in the Lower Grasse River. The sediments were dewatered and disposed in ALCOA's on-site landfill.



**Remediation of Remaining River Sediments:** Following completion of the non-time critical removal action, ALCOA, under EPA oversight, has completed the investigation of contaminants in the Grasse River, and issued the Comprehensive Characterization of the Lower Grasse River Report in 2001. ALCOA, under EPA oversight is completing an Analysis of Alternatives for remediating the remaining river sediments. Based on the Analysis of Alternatives, EPA will select a final cleanup remedy for the remaining river sediments. A Capping Pilot Study on the Grasse River sediments occurred in 2001. In summer 2002, EPA plans to issue a Proposed Plan and take public comment on the cleanup plan for the Grasse River.

**Site Facts:** In November 1989, the EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to ALCOA requiring ALCOA to undertake an investigation of contamination in the Grasse River near its Massena facility and evaluate alternatives to address the contamination. The Order also includes design and implementation of the final remedy for the river system once one has been selected by EPA. ALCOA is in compliance with the Order.

## Environmental Progress



Dredging highly contaminated sediments adjacent to ALCOA's primary outfall removed about 8,000 lbs. of PCBs, an estimated 20% of the PCB mass in the Lower Grasse River. Clean up of the facility has been completed under NYSDEC oversight. Plant clean up, coupled with modifications to the wastewater treatment system have effectively controlled the source of PCB contamination to the Grasse River. The source control and removal actions have reduced the level of PCBs to fish and wildlife. This, in turn, will reduce the risk to humans while ALCOA completes long-term remediation of the remaining river sediments.

## Site Repository



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Community Building, Hogansburg, New York 13655

Massena Public Library, 41 Glen Street, Massena, New York 13662